Rumination Interrupt

A three-step protocol for when the loop starts and you cannot remember what to do.

Rumination is the thinking that goes nowhere; the same thought, rephrased, three more times. It feels productive while it is happening. It is not. This is a three-step interrupt you can run in under a minute. Read it once, then cut out the card at the bottom to keep with you.

STOP. Notice you are in the loop.

Rumination feels like thinking, but it is not generating new information. Catch yourself in the act. The thought is not new; you have had it three times today, or thirty.

NAME. Say it to yourself: "This is rumination, not new information."

Naming what is happening puts a small gap between you and the loop. You are not the spiral; you are the one noticing the spiral. The naming itself is part of the interrupt.

SHIFT. Pick one sense and one small action.

One sense: notice something you can see, hear, feel, smell, or taste right now (the texture of your sleeve, the temperature of the room, the sound of the fridge). One small action: stand up, drink water, step outside, name three objects in the room. The point is not to "stop thinking about it"; the point is to give your attention something else to do until the loop loses momentum.

This thought is a habit, not the truth.

Tear out for your wallet

Cut along the dotted line. Keep it where you will see it.

Rumination Interrupt

1. STOP. Catch the loop.
2. NAME. "This is rumination, not new info."
3. SHIFT. One sense + one small action.

This thought is a habit, not the truth.

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Educational content; not a substitute for therapy. If you are working through something significant, consider connecting with a counsellor or your family doctor.